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## QUEEN VICTORIA'S KEYS.

THE time-honoured ceremony that is still observed when the gates of Her Majesty's Tower of London are 'locked-up' is probably not unfamiliar to the public. What actually occurs, however, can be witnessed by a very limited number of persons who are not resident within the Tower; for a night's immurement in that celebrated feudal 'strength' is essential in order that the proceedings of the 'escort for the Keys' may be satisfactorily seen and heard, the verbal portion of the formalities being by no means the least important. But the present writer having frequently been called upon to accompany the Queen's Keys in their nightly perambulations, has enjoyed opportunities, not open to all, for viewing the curious ceremony of 'locking-up' from the best possible vantage-ground. A brief sketch of the somewhat unique details connected with it may perhaps prove interesting to the uninitiated reader.

When not engaged in making their midnight or early-morning progresses, the Queen's Keys are deposited in the residence of the Deputy Constable of the fortress. Not very remarkable from an architectural point of view, this house stands almost in the shadow of the weather-beaten walls of the White Tower—the famous Norman 'keep' that can boast of eight centuries' authentic history, and around which as a nucleus the various other buildings now collectively known as the 'Tower' have from time to time been erected. And the dwelling-place of the Keys overlooks the spot—now inclosed by a railing—where so many political offences, real or imputed, have been expiated on the block. The Keys, when brought forth, are invariably carried by a warder, who is a member of the corps of Yeomen of the Guard, or Beefeaters as they are familiarly called. It may quite fairly be said that the antiquated, but picturesque, costume of these men constitutes one of the 'sights' of the Tower; though in recent times the garments have been to a considerable extent

shorn of their medieval characteristics. Besides the onerous duty of carrying the Queen's Keys, the Beefeaters are in other ways employed within the precincts of the Tower; among other things, they exercise—or at least they used to exercise—a sort of supervision over the visitors who flock into it on 'open' days. Beyond its gates they take part in certain state ceremonials; and, as is well known, assist in the periodical searching of the vaults underneath the Houses of Parliament, thus materially helping to keep alive the remembrance of Guy Fawkes and the celebrated 'treason and plot' in which he was so deeply implicated. That neither the supervision nor the search is wholly unnecessary, has been sufficiently well demonstrated by events of recent occurrence.

By the Main Guard, which occupies a guard-house distant about a stone's throw from the Constable's quarters, the Keys are provided with an armed escort on the occasions on which they venture into the open air. This guard is 'mounted' daily by some thirty soldiers; they are furnished by a regiment stationed in the adjacent barracks, which were constructed to replace other buildings totally destroyed by the great fire that made such havoc in the Tower nearly half a century ago. Over and above attending to the royal Keys, the members of the guard have other and perhaps equally responsible duties to perform, being in a general way answerable for the security of the fortress and its contents during the twenty-four hours they continue 'on guard.' One very important item in their tour of duty may here be mentioned—this is the protection of the Jewel House, within which are kept articles of almost fabulous value, including the regalia and the remarkable Kohinoor diamond. So low in the ceiling is the entrance to this Eldorado, that soldiers of short stature are selected to stand as sentries therein; for a tall man bearing arms would, under the circumstances, be apt to excite the ridicule rather than the awe of the visitors who are conducted into the place by the Beefeaters. The

Main Guard, as its title implies, is the principal one; but two other distinct guards are maintained in the Tower; and it is necessary, in order to understand what follows, to rapidly glance at these. One of them mounts at the drawbridge—a structure that no longer exists, and of which, indeed, the guard itself seems to be the sole memento. The party is what is termed a 'corporal's' guard. The other, known as the Spur Guard, occupies a group of buildings which probably represent the ancient barbican of the stronghold. It is a 'sergeant's' guard, and is intrusted with the keeping of the two outer gates, to which we shall have to refer later on.

When the Main Guard enters upon its duties in the forenoon, certain men are detailed to act when required as an escort for the Keys. Their services in this respect are not, however, called upon till the near approach of midnight. But when the clock on the White Tower begins to chime a quarter to twelve, the word 'Keys!' uttered in a stentorian tone by a sergeant rouses the soldiers, who are usually slumbering with much apparent comfort on the wooden guard-bed. In a few moments they are transferred to the exterior of the building, fully accoutred, and accompanied by a youthful drummer, who bears a rather dusty lantern which he has hastily lit. Perhaps the lantern may be regarded mainly as a sort of relic of the times when it may be supposed to have afforded the only available light on the route traversed by the Keys. But the way is now amply illuminated by gas lamps of the ordinary pattern; and the not very brilliant lantern might, without very serious disadvantage, be dispensed with. Having drawn up his somewhat drowsy men, the sergeant has now to wait for the officer, if that individual in authority has not already appeared. The interval, if any, is employed by the soldiers in yawning, or in bestowing a finishing touch upon the adjustment of their accoutrements, which have no doubt become slightly displaced during their owner's late 'changes of front' on the guard-bed. When present, the captain of the guard—having ascertained that the escort is likewise 'present,' or complete in number—marches off the little party towards the Constable's house. There the soldiers are met by the warden, suspended from whose hand, as he descends the steps, the Queen's Keys jingle merrily.

At this juncture, the sergeant commands his subordinates, whom he has halted for a moment, to 'present arms;' and the Beefeater takes post a little in advance of his protectors, who forthwith set off in the direction of the gates. The first sentry to be passed stands expectant under the veranda at the entrance to the guardroom, where is also the whole guard not elsewhere engaged: it has been 'turned out' to do honour to the Keys. When the sentry sees the escort, headed by the lantern, coming very near to his post, he calls out: 'Halt! who comes there?' not, 'Who goes there?' the popular acception of a military challenge, perhaps derived from the words used in like contingencies by sentinels of certain continental armies. The advancing party is brought to a stand-still by this summons; and the warden, who, as a rule, is enveloped in the folds of an antiquated-looking cloak,

replies, in a kind of sepulchral tone of voice: 'Keys.' 'Whose keys?' inquires the soldier, who is meanwhile standing with his piece at the 'port'—an attitude preparatory to assuming that of the 'charge.' The warden answers: 'Queen Victoria's Keys.' But even now the escort is not permitted to proceed on its journey; for the obdurate sentry, coming down to the charge, makes the demand: 'Stand, Queen Victoria's Keys. Advance one and give the countersign.' The password, being well known to the warden, is of course given, and the sentry cries: 'Pass, Queen Victoria's Keys. All's well.' After the above dialogue has come to a termination, the Keys are conveyed past the guardhouse, being in their transit saluted by the assembled guard, which is then 'turned in.'

Before the Beefeater and the escort have marched twenty yards, further obstructions delay their progress. These fresh obstacles appear in the forms of the vigilant sentinels at the Jewel House and at the Traitors' Gate; which latter was once used for the admission of 'traitors' brought down the river from Westminster. In succession, each of the soldiers challenges in the same way as his comrade at the Main Guard. And when the Beefeater has satisfactorily answered both men, the party moves onward for some little distance, and is a fourth time brought to a halt by a sentry at the Byward Gate. This gate is on the inner margin of the now dry ditch that encircles the Tower. It stands under an arch, which is surmounted and flanked by turrets or fortifications of a long obsolete design. Besides the soldier alluded to, a Yeoman is at all hours on duty at this point. He is always to be found in an apartment, with a quaint vaulted roof, close by the gate: the place has obviously once been the quarter of a regular military guard. The sentry here having been satisfied as to the character of the escort, it passes on, traverses a causeway leading across the moat, and reaches the Spur Guard. There, of course, it is stopped by a sentry belonging to that body; and the Keys are eventually saluted by this soldier, as well as by the guard of which he forms a unit. And now, after all those impediments have been overcome, the Barrier Gate is at length approached, its custodian having been appeased in the stereotyped manner. The Barrier Gate is the outermost gate of the Tower, and it is necessarily the first to be locked.

As already noticed, the warden marches a little in front of the escort. When he is within some fifteen or twenty paces' distance from the gate, he halts. Then the men composing the escort advance, and under the superintendence of the sergeant, line the sides of the road, facing inwards towards its middle. The Beefeater, with considerable solemnity of demeanour, now walks up between the ranks, selects the appropriate key, and locks the gate, which in the meantime has been closed by a corporal. This operation accomplished, and having given the gate a shake, to assure himself of its being properly fastened, the Beefeater resumes his position a few yards away, passing as before between the lines of soldiers. Arms are presented to the Keys, both when they are proceeding to the gate and when they are retiring from it, by

word of command from the sergeant; for the officer remains behind with the Main Guard.

The party is now rearranged in the order of march, and at once retraces its steps to the next gate to be secured—the one at the Barbican or Spur Guard. On the outer side of the ditch, this portal is exactly opposite the Byward Gate, which we have seen to be situated on its inner bank. Having passed through the as yet open gate, the soldiers are again drawn up in lines, and it is closed and locked; and as the key is withdrawn from the lock, all present say, or are understood to say: 'God save Queen Victoria.' The Spur Guard is turned out to salute; and the Keys and their escort retreat across the moat to the Byward Gate, where precisely the same ceremony takes place. This completed, the three chief gates of the Tower have been made fast for the night.

But there exists a fourth gate, which may be accurately described as a 'back' entrance to the fortress; it stands in the vicinity of the ancient drawbridge, in the eastern portion of the outer wall of the Tower. The gate in this somewhat remote region is locked in a slightly less formal style than the other or 'front' gates; and the men of the escort soon step out smartly on their return journey to the Main Guard. There they are hailed by the sentry as at the outset, and to the echo of his final 'All's well,' the Queen's Keys are carried into their quarters.

No one, however high in rank or authority, can enter, or leave, the Tower after midnight. But the sergeant in command of the Spur Guard is authorised to admit residents as far as his guardhouse, where there is a waiting-room for the accommodation of such belated persons. For this purpose he is provided with keys—quite distinct from those of the escort—wherewith to open, not the gates, but wickets alongside them. And thus the people admitted do not enter the Tower proper; for it will be remembered that the ditch intervenes between the Barbican and the Byward Gate, where there is no wicket. The architects, ancient or modern, who designed the waiting-room took pains that it should not be a very attractive abode; and though it may compare favourably with another apartment said to exist in the Tower, and called 'Little Ease,' there is yet but small encouragement held forth to the inhabitants of the fortress to remain abroad subsequent to the hour appointed for 'locking-up.'

At five o'clock in the morning, the sergeant again summons his men; on this occasion, to open the gates of the Tower. The ceremony, though essentially similar to the midnight one, is perhaps a little more hurriedly performed in the unlocking than it is in the locking of the gates; and the officer on guard does not appear in the morning, though we may safely assume that he had to 'turn out' when the opening of the Tower was a more significant matter than it happily now is. But besides being present with his guard at midnight, he has other duties to carry out: by day, he marches off the 'relief' at intervals of two hours; and in the afternoon goes round the sentries, hearing them repeat their orders—an almost obsolete custom, but still kept up in the Tower. Previous to the hour appointed for this ordeal, the men

may be seen studiously reading their instructions, or committing them to memory as they pace up and down. By night, the officer goes his 'rounds' accompanied by a small escort, including the drummer-boy and his rather opaque lantern. In the course of this tour, every sentinel connected with the garrison is visited; and by the time the rounds return to the Main Guard, the members of that important body have usually been called into activity by the loud cry of 'Keys!'

## IN ALL SHADES.

### CHAPTER XIV.

EDWARD and Marian spent their first week in Trinidad with the Hawthorns senior. Mrs Hawthorn was kindness itself to Marian—a dear, gentle, motherly old lady, very proud of her boy, especially of his ability to read Arabic, which seemed to her a profundity of learning never yet dreamt of in the annals of humanity—and immensely pleased with her new daughter-in-law; but nothing on earth that Marian could say to her would induce her to unlock the mystery of that alarming telegram. 'No, no, my dear,' she would say, shaking her head gloomily and wiping her spectacles, whenever Marian recurred to the subject, 'you'll find it all out only too soon. God forbid, my darling, that ever I should break it to you. I love you far too well for that. Marian, Marian, my dear daughter, you should never, never, never have come here!' And then she would burst immediately into tears. And that was all that poor frightened Marian could ever get out of her new mother-in-law.

All that first week, old Mr Hawthorn was never tired of urging upon Edward to go back again at once to England. 'I can depart in peace now, my boy,' he said; 'I have seen you at last, and known you, and had my heart gladdened by your presence here. Indeed, if you wish it, I'd rather go back to England with you again, than that you should stay in this unsuitable Trinidad. Why bury your talents and your learning here, when you might be rising to fame and honour over in London? What's the use of your classical knowledge out in the West Indies? What's the use of your Arabic? What's the use of your law, even? We have nothing to try here but petty cases between planter and servant: of what good to you in that will be all your work at English tenures and English land laws? You're hiding your light under a bushel. You're putting a trotting horse into a hansom cab. You're wasting your Arabic on people who don't even know the difference between Greek and Latin.'

To all which, Edward steadily replied, that he wouldn't go back as long as this mystery still hung unsolved over him; and that, as he had practically made an agreement with the colonial government, it would be dishonourable in him to break it for unknown and unspecified reasons. As soon as possible, he declared firmly, he would take up his abode in his own district.

House-hunting is reduced to its very simplest elements in the West Indian colonies. There



is one house in each parish or county which has been inhabited from time immemorial by one functionary for the time being. The late Attorney-general dies of yellow fever, or drinks himself to death, or gets promotion, or retires to England, and another Attorney-general is duly appointed by constituted authority in his vacant place. The new man succeeds naturally to the house and furniture of his predecessor—as naturally, indeed, as he succeeds to any of his other functions, offices, and prerogatives. Not that there is the least compulsion in the matter, only you must. As there is no other house vacant in the community, and as nobody ever thinks of building a new one—except when the old one tumbles down by efflux of time or shock of earthquake—the only thing left for one to do is to live in the place immemorially occupied by all one's predecessors in the same office. Hence it happened that at the beginning of their second week in the island of Trinidad, Marian and Edward Hawthorn found themselves ensconced with hardly any trouble in the roomy bungalow known as Mulberry Lodge, and he hereditarily attached to the post of District Court Judge for the district of Westmoreland.

Marian laid herself out at once for callers, and very soon the callers began to drop in. About the fourth day after they had settled into their new house, she was sitting in the big, bare, tropical-looking drawing-room—a great, gaunt, spare barn, scantily furnished with a few tables and rocking-chairs upon the carpetless polished floor—so gaunt, that even Marian's deft fingers failed to make it at first look home-like or habitable—when a light carriage drew up hastily with a dash at the front-door of the low bungalow. The young bride pulled her bows straight quickly at the heavy, old-fashioned, gilt mirror, and waited anxiously to receive the expected visitors. It was her first appearance as mistress of her establishment. In a minute, Thomas, the negro butler—every man-servant is a butler in Trinidad, even if he is only a boy of twenty—ushered the new-comers pompously into the bare drawing-room. Marian took their cards and glanced at them hastily. Two gentlemen—the Honourable Colonial Secretary, and the Honourable Director of Irrigation.

The Colonial Secretary sidled into a chair, and took up his parable at once with a very profuse and ponderous apology. 'My wife, Mrs Hawthorn, my wife, I'm sorry to say, was most unfortunately unable to accompany me here this morning.—Charmingly you've laid out this room, really; so very different from what it used to be in poor old Macmurdo's time.—Isn't it, Colonel Daubeney?—Poor old Macmurdo died in the late yellow fever, you know, my dear madam, and Mr Hawthorn fills his vacancy. Excellent fellow, poor old Macmurdo—ninth judge I've known killed off by yellow fever in this district since I've been here.—My wife, I was saying, when your charming room compelled me to digress, is far from well at present—a malady of the country: this shocking climate; or else, I'm sure she'd have been delighted to have called upon you with me this morning. The loss is hers, the loss is hers, Mrs Hawthorn. I shall certainly tell her so. Immensely sorry.'

Colonel Daubeney, the Honourable Director of Irrigation, was a far jauntier and more easy-spoken man. 'And Mrs Daubeney, my dear madam,' he said with a fluent manner that Marian found exceedingly distasteful, 'is most unfortunately just this moment down—with toothache. Uncommon nasty thing to be down with, toothache. A perfect martyr to it. She begged me to make her excuses.—Mr Hawthorn—to Edward, who had just come in.—Mrs Daubeney begged me to make her excuses. She regrets that she can't call to-day on Mrs Hawthorn.—Beautiful view you have, upon my word, from your front piazza.'

'It's the same view, I've no doubt,' Edward answered severely, 'as it used to be in the days of my predecessor.'

'Eh! What! Ah, bless my soul! Quite so,' Colonel Daubeney answered, dropping his eyeglass from his eye in some amazement.—'Ha! very good that—confoundedly good, really, Mr Hawthorn.'

Marian was a little surprised that Edward, usually so impassive, should so unmistakably snub the colonel at first sight; and yet she felt there was something very offensive in the man's familiar manner, that made the retort perfectly justifiable, and even necessary.

They lingered a little while, talking very ordinary tropical small-talk; and then the colonel, with an ugly smile, took up his hat, and declared, with many unnecessary asseverations, that he must really be off this very minute. Mrs Daubeney would so much regret having lost the precious opportunity. The Honourable Colonial Secretary rose at the same moment and added that he must be going too. Mrs Fitzmaurice would never forgive herself for that distressing local malady which had so unfortunately deprived her of the privilege and pleasure.—Good-morning, good-morning.

But as both gentlemen jumped into the dog-cart outside, Edward could hear the Colonial Secretary, through the open door, saying to the colonel in a highly amused voice: 'By George, he gave you as much as he got every bit, I swear, Daubeney.'

To which the colonel responded with a short laugh: 'Yes, my dear fellow; and didn't you see, by Jove, he twiggid it?'

At this they both laughed together immoderately, and drove off at once laughing, very much pleased with one another.

Before Marian and her husband had time to exchange their surprise and wonder at such odd behaviour on the part of two apparently well-bred men, another buggy drove up to the door, from which a third gentleman promptly descended. His card showed him to be the wealthy proprietor of a large and flourishing neighbouring sugar-estate.

'Called round,' he said to Edward, with a slight bow towards Marian, 'just to pay my respects to our new judge, whom I'm glad to welcome to the district of Westmoreland. A son of Mr Hawthorn of Aguaita is sure to be popular with most of his neighbours.—Ah—hem—my wife, I'm sorry to say, Mrs Hawthorn, is at present suffering from—extreme exhaustion, due to the heat. She hopes you'll excuse her not calling upon you. Otherwise, I'm sure,

she'd have been most delighted, most delighted. —Dear me, what an exquisite prospect you have from your veranda!' The neighbouring planter stopped for perhaps ten minutes in the midst of languishing conversation, and then vanished exactly as his two predecessors had done before him.

Marian turned to her husband in blank dismay. 'O Edward, Edward,' she cried, unable to conceal her chagrin and humiliation, 'what on earth can be the meaning of it?'

'My darling,' he answered, taking her hand in his tenderly, 'I haven't the very faintest conception.'

In the course of the afternoon, three more gentlemen called, each alone, and each of them in turn apologised profusely, in almost the very self-same words, for his wife's absence. The last was a fat old gentleman in the Customs' service, who declared with effusion many times over that Mrs Bolitho was really prostrated by the extraordinary season. 'Most unusual weather, this, Mrs Hawthorn. I've never known so depressing a summer in the island of Trinidad since I was a boy, ma'am.'

'So it would seem,' Edward answered drily. 'The whole female population of the island seems to be suffering from an extraordinary complication of local disorders.'

'Bless my soul!' the fat old gentleman ejaculated with a stare. 'Then you've found out that, have you?—Excuse me, excuse me. I—didn't know— Hm, I hardly expected that you expected—or rather, that Mrs Hawthorn expected— Ah, quite so.—Good-morning, good-morning.'

Marian flung herself in a passion of tears upon the drawing-room sofa. 'If any one else calls this afternoon, Thomas,' she said, 'I'm not at home. I won't see—I can't see them; I'll endure it no longer.—O Edward, darling, for God's sake, tell me, why on earth are they treating us as if—as if I were some sort of moral leper? They won't call upon me. What can be the reason of it?'

Edward Hawthorn held his head between his hands and walked rapidly up and down the bare drawing-room. 'I can't make it out,' he cried; 'I can't understand it. Marian—dearest—it is too terrible!'

### THE TURQUOISE.

THERE are few gems more commonly seen on jewelry than the blue turquoise. Its beauty, its serviceable hardness, its pleasing contrast with gold, and its moderate price, explain why it is so much esteemed. Only a few exceptionally fine specimens of the stone rank with the 'rich and rare' gems. In the unlikely event of Persia being at war with all the rest of the world, it would, no doubt, become scarce and dear outside the dominion of the Shah, since it is only in that country that the mineral in a state fit for the jeweller's purpose is found. Much and widely as the turquoise is used for personal ornaments, the supply has for some time considerably exceeded the demand except for fine stones of an uncommon size. But, as is the case with all precious stones, unusually large pieces—those

approaching the size of a hazel nut, for example—when of good quality, are eagerly sought after, and have a high intrinsic value.

The turquoise has in all likelihood been used as a gem from a very remote antiquity, since the range of mountains where it is plentifully found is situated at no great distance from the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, near to, if not within, the area believed by many to have been the cradle of the human race. By some scholars, it is thought highly probable that the turquoise was used for inlaying the delicate and beautiful gold-work of ancient Greece; and at all events, there is a cameo portrait of a classic Greek prince in this mineral among the specimens in the famous collection of Marlborough gems. There is some doubt about the name this precious stone was known by in Pliny's time. He mentions that the *callais*, which was probably the turquoise, was found in Asia, where it occurred projecting from the surface of inaccessible rocks, whence it was obtained by means of slings; but these were the days of fables. That it was known to the ancient Romans is, however, proved by the fact that there still exist some, though only a very few, of their works of art cut in this mineral.

Want of certainty about the name applied to the turquoise in classic times leaves us in doubt as to what mystic virtues were then attributed to it. But in the middle ages, the turquoise, like other gems, was believed to have wonderful properties; indeed, it was credited with more supernatural virtues than most of them. The wearer of it had both his sight strengthened and his spirits cheered; he enjoyed immunity from the consequences of a fall by the gem itself breaking, in order to save his bones; and his turquoise, like himself, turned pale if he became sick. When its possessor died, it entirely lost its colour; but recovered it again on passing into the hands of a new owner. In some mysterious way, when suspended by a string, it correctly struck the hours on the inside of a glass vessel. Other precious stones have lost all the marvellous powers that belonged to them for centuries: the emerald no longer relieves the fatigued eyesight; the diamond cannot now dispel fear; the sapphire, though still cold to the touch, has ceased to be able to extinguish fire. In these perverse days, the hailstorm comes down even upon the wearer of an amethyst, and bright red coral attracts rather than repels robbers. But the turquoise still retains one of its mysterious properties, and flaunts it in the face of modern science. Sometimes slowly, sometimes suddenly, it unaccountably turns pale, becomes spotted, or changes from blue to white; and specimens that behave in this capricious manner are found more commonly than those whose colour is distinctly permanent.

The turquoise is called in chemical language a hydrated phosphate of alumina. This means that it consists mainly of phosphoric acid and alumina, along with nearly twenty per cent. of water. It owes its colour to small quantities of compounds of copper and iron. It occurs blue, green, and bluish green; but the change to a pale, mottled, or white colour, which inferior turquoises undergo, generally takes place soon after they are taken from the mine. These

colours are opaque, or only very slightly translucent, and the stone has a somewhat waxy lustre. It is only those of a fast 'sky-blue' colour that are prized for jewelry; but at one time, a green turquoise was more highly valued than a blue one. Nowadays, however, people have no patience with either precious stones or precious metals that can be easily mistaken for those of inferior value. Either green felspar, which is of the same hardness, or malachite, which is softer, might be mistaken for green turquoise, and both are more common minerals. But there is hardly any other natural stone of the same, or even inferior, hardness that can be confounded with a blue turquoise. The material of some fossil teeth when coloured with phosphate of iron does, however, resemble it. Still, there need be no confusion, because this substance is softer. It is called odontolite or occidental turquoise; while the real stone is known by jewellers as the oriental turquoise. Odontolite is easily recognised under the microscope by the characteristic markings of dentine. Opaque blue glass can be made to imitate the turquoise; but the former differs in lustre and in the nature of its fracture.

Turquoises are found in Tibet, China, and the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai; but, as has been already stated, the supply for jewellers' purposes comes almost wholly from the celebrated Persian mines. Very little was known about these till a remarkably interesting and exhaustive Report upon them was recently furnished to the British Foreign Office by Mr A. Houtum Schindler, who was for a short time Director of the mines. They are situated in a range of mountains bounding on the north an open plain in the Bâr-i-Madên district, thirty-two miles north-west of Nishâpûr, in the province of Khorassan. Botanists tell us that the brightest blue is seen on alpine flowers. If pure mountain air could be supposed to brighten the colour of a gem as well as a flower, there is no want of it where these turquoise veins occur. Their position is between five and six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and a strong north wind blows almost continually over the ridges of the hills, rendering the situation very healthy. Wheat, barley, and mulberry trees grow well on the slopes at the lower of these heights.

Geologically, the mountains are composed of sandstones and nummulitic limestones lying on clay-slates and inclosing immense beds of gypsum and rock-salt. But these stratified rocks are broken through and metamorphosed by rocks of igneous origin, such as greenstones and porphyries. The turquoise-bearing veins occur in the metamorphic strata, and the mines proper consist of shafts and galleries in the solid rock. There are also 'diggings' in the detritus of disintegrated rock washed down towards the plain, and it is here that some of the best turquoises are found. A number of the mines are ancient and very extensive; and although most of them are now more or less in a state of neglect, Mr Schindler states that the presence of many old shafts—now filled up—for light and ventilation proves that they have at one time been skilfully worked, and were probably then under government control. But they appear to have been, for nearly two centuries, farmed by the villagers, who only think

of a quick return for their money, and therefore cut away the rock wherever they see turquoises, without leaving proper supports to prevent the falling in of the mine. Several labourers have at different times been buried in the galleries through the rubbish being badly propped up. The perpendicular depth of one mine is one hundred and sixty feet, and others are nearly as deep. The miners work with picks and crow-bars in much the same way as that in which vein-mining is carried on elsewhere; and it is a curious illustration of how slowly long-established processes are altered in the East, that gunpowder should have been used in these mines only within the last thirty years. But it is not strange, as can be seen by some examples of rock-blasting at home, to learn that the results obtained by gunpowder are, in one view, less satisfactory than those got by the pick. The powder does more work, but it is also more destructive, as it breaks the turquoises into small pieces.

Here we may say a few words about how it fares with the people who are occupied with the mining, cutting, and selling of the turquoises. About two hundred men work in the mines or at the diggings, and some thirty more—elders of the village—buy the turquoises and sell them to merchants and jewellers. A certain additional number of hands cut and polish the stones; but this work is done elsewhere, as well as in the district where they are found. The population of the villages in the neighbourhood of the mines is about twelve hundred, and the inhabitants, as in most mining districts, are improvident. Nearly all the men, and not a few of the women, are inveterate opium-smokers. Agriculture is neglected. Turquoise-dealing and its gains make the people careless of anything else. As a rule, the money is quickly spent; and men who easily earn a sum fully equal to fifty pounds sterling per annum, have often nothing to eat.

At the mines, the turquoises are roughly divided into three classes, of first, second, and third qualities. All the stones of good and fast colour and favourable shape belong to the first class. But how curiously these vary in value will be best understood by quoting Mr Schindler's own words: 'It is impossible to fix any price, or classify them according to different qualities. I have not yet seen two stones alike. A stone two-thirds of an inch in length, two-fifths of an inch in width, and about half an inch in thickness, cut *peikâni* (conical) shape, was valued at Meshed at three hundred pounds; another, of about the same size, shape, and cut, was valued at only eighty pounds. Turquoises of the size of a pea are sometimes sold for eight pounds. The colour most prized is the deep blue of the sky. A small speck of a lighter colour, which only connoisseurs can distinguish, or an almost unappreciable tinge of green, decreases the value considerably. Then there is that undefinable property of a good turquoise, the *zât*, something like the "water" of a diamond or the lustre of a pearl; a fine coloured turquoise without the *zât* is not worth much.' He subsequently adds: 'The above-mentioned three hundred pounds Meshed turquoise was bought from the finder by one of the Rish-i-Safids (elders of the village) for three pounds; the latter sold it still uncut at Meshed



for thirty-eight pounds. As soon as it was cut, its true value became apparent, and it was sent to Paris, where it was valued at six hundred pounds. The second purchaser, however, received only three hundred and forty pounds for it; the difference was gained by the agents.' Among the fine turquoises in the possession of the Shah, there is one valued at two thousand pounds.

The best stones of the second class are worth about ninety pounds per pound; whilst the most inferior will scarcely bring a twentieth part of this price. The latter are chiefly used in Persia for the decoration of swords, horse-trappings, pipe-heads, and the common kinds of jewelry. Small cut turquoises of a slightly better quality than these sell at the rate of from two to three shillings per thousand. In the third class are included stones unsaleable in Persia, as well as large flat stones, some of which are esteemed for amulets, brooches, buckles, and the like. The prices given there will be more than doubled when the turquoises are sold in Europe.

The turquoise being an opaque stone, it would be useless to cut facets upon it, as these would not reflect light in the same way as when fashioned upon a transparent gem like a diamond or a sapphire. There are three ways of cutting the turquoise, all much in the same style—the flat or slightly convex form, the truncated cone, and the tallow drop or *en cabochon*. The higher the conical and convex surfaces in the two latter, the more the turquoises are prized. None but a fine deep-coloured stone can be advantageously cut into a conical shape, since one of pale colour would appear almost white at the apex. Turquoises are cut by the hand on wheels made of a composition of emery and gum. They are afterwards polished by being rubbed on a fine-grained sandstone, and then on a piece of soft leather with turquoise dust.

Of the few mines which yield good turquoises, one or two are dangerous, on account of the loose rubbish they contain. The one from which the best of all are obtained yields very few. Some mines contain stones which look well at first, but soon change their colour and fade. Mr Schindler gives an instance of a recently found turquoise, as large as a walnut and of fine colour, being presented to His Majesty the Shah, which he had for only two days, when it became green and whitish, and therefore of no value. Throughout Europe, there has been a great fall in the price of this gem within the last few years, and it would seem that this is owing to the fact that large quantities of stones which appeared to be of fine quality, but were really of fugitive colour, had been disposed of not long ago at good prices. Up to the time that they were sold, their colour had been preserved by keeping them damp; but when taken out of their moist packing, they slowly became white. It need hardly be said that the colour of most precious stones is very permanent. There is, however, a variety of opal occurring in Mexico which is very beautiful when first found; but after a brief time it entirely loses its bright play of colours. Both the turquoise and the opal are peculiar in containing a considerable amount of water in their composition.

The colour of a fine turquoise has not escaped

the notice of enamellers and potters. For centuries, an imitation of its characteristic and lovely blue has been applied among other colours to the exquisitely decorated pottery of Persia. On the most expensive and perhaps also the most beautiful of all porcelain, the Sèvres ware of soft body made in the latter half of last century, the turquoise blue is often a conspicuous colour. Towards the end of the century, when the directors of the far-famed *fabrique* changed the character of the china to that of a hard paste or body, its decoration with a turquoise colour was no longer possible. But modern English porcelain, like the old Sèvres, is of soft paste; and one of the feats on which our great Staffordshire potters pride themselves is the successful production upon it, in recent years, of a soft and clear turquoise blue.

## THE HAUNTED JUNGLE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

### CHAP. III.—THE BREAKING OF THE SPELL.

WHEN the day dawned, it found the púsári still in the temple offering prayers and supplications to the god for deliverance from the spell he was under. As soon as it was sufficiently light for him to see his way, he left the temple and went down into the village. A hope had risen in his breast that his prayers may have been answered, and he was anxious to ascertain whether he was still invisible. The hope was soon dispelled. As he passed the door of a hut, an old man came out yawning and stretching his arms, and though the púsári stood right before him, took no notice of him. Filled with despair, the púsári went to his own house and sat in the porch, a prey to the gloomiest, most miserable thoughts. He occupied himself in watching Vallee. The overwhelming grief and agitation of the preceding day had passed off, leaving her listless, unhappy, and restless. She was trying to attend to her household duties; but her thoughts were elsewhere, for she sighed frequently and her eyes filled with tears very often. Every now and then, she went to the door and glanced out. On one such occasion she uttered an exclamation of surprise. On looking out, the púsári saw several men and women whom he recognised as some of his relatives, who lived in a village at some distance, coming towards him. On entering the house, one or two of the newcomers saluted Vallee curtly and coldly, but the rest took no notice of her. Abashed and pained by their conduct, Vallee retired to a corner and waited to see what they had come for. They made themselves quite at home at once. It was soon evident they had heard of the púsári's disappearance, and were come to see about his property, being persuaded he would never come back. After a while, they began to examine the house and to make a sort of rough inventory of what it contained.

'What are you doing, uncle?' asked Vallee of one of them, a thin, ferret-faced man, who was her father's brother.

The man made no reply. Presently, he caught sight of the púsári's strong-box in a corner of the hut, and turning to her, abruptly demanded the key.

'My father keeps it,' she replied.

'Do not name your father to us!' said her uncle sharply. 'We have cast him off; we disown him!'

'But not his property, it appears,' retorted Vallee with spirit. 'And I tell you, Sinnan Ummiyan, it will not be well for you when my father comes home and hears what you have said of him!'

'Dare you mock me, daughter of a murderer!' exclaimed her uncle, as he gave her a sharp box on the ear.

Vallee did not cry out or burst into tears, but drawing herself up, walked silently and proudly out of the house and disappeared into the jungle.

Great was the disgust of the púsári at the conduct of his rapacious and selfish relatives, and his indignation at their treatment of his daughter. Muttering wrathfully to himself that he would make them regret it, if he ever regained his human form, he got up and went out after Vallee. As he entered the jungle at the spot where he had seen her disappear, he heard a voice that he instantly recognised—it was that of Valan Elúvan. Vallee had just met her lover.

'What is the matter, sweet one?' he heard Valan say. 'Are you crying for your father?'

'Aiyo, aiyo!' wailed the girl. 'I shall never see him again!'

'Do not give way to such thoughts, little one,' replied Valan. 'He will certainly return. He has probably gone to some distant village on sudden and important business.'

'O Valan,' exclaimed Vallee, 'then you don't think—you do not believe that he—killed the headman?'

'No; I do not, Púliya knows,' returned her lover gravely. 'Twas some stranger, no doubt, that did the rascally deed. Your father will doubtless return soon and prove his innocence.—Were those some of your people who came to your house just now?' he added.

Vallee explained who they were, and told him of her uncle's treatment of her.

'Never mind, child,' he said soothingly, when she had finished speaking. 'Should anything have happened to your father, and he not return, I will take you to my house as my wife; and we will go and live in some distant village where nothing is known about either of us, and no one can say malicious things of us.—What say you, sweet one?'

Vallee made no reply and no protest when he tenderly embraced her. They continued to talk together for some minutes. When they separated, the púsári followed Valan home, as he wished to see what his enemy was doing. As they entered the house, the púsári saw Iyan hastily hide some money he had been fingering, in his waist-cloth. Valan, too, saw his brother's action; he did not say anything, however, till he had deposited his jungle-knife in a corner; then, without looking round, he said quietly: 'Elder brother, where did you get that money?'

'What money?' blustered Iyan.

'That which you have in your waist-cloth.'

'I have had a debt repaid,' growled Iyan after a short pause.

'What debt?' persisted Valan. 'I did not know any one owed you anything.'

Iyan grunted angrily, but made no answer.

'Where were you the day before yesterday, when the múdliya was murdered?' continued Valan in a stern, grave tone and looking keenly at his brother.—'And why,' he continued, when he received no answer, 'did you change your cloth when you came home that night, and wash the one you had been wearing? And why, too, did you—?'

'Mind your own business!' interrupted Iyan fiercely, as he got up and walked out. 'You had better not spy on me, Valan Elúvan, or I will make you repent it!'

For some minutes after his brother had gone, Valan sat looking thoughtfully out of the door, evidently turning something over in his mind; then he got up and carefully searched the hut, examining with great care a cloth he found in a corner. He appeared not to be satisfied with what he saw, for he shook his head, and muttered two or three times to himself in a tone of sorrow and misgiving.

The whole of that day the púsári wandered restlessly about, spending most of the time, however, in and about his own house. By noon, his relatives had quite settled down in his house. It was clear they had no expectation of his ever returning, and had, therefore, constituted themselves his heirs. They did not treat Vallee with cruelty or harshness, but simply ignored her, or treated her as if she was dependent on them. Early in the afternoon, the young headman whom the púsári had seen at Mankulam the previous day, came to the village armed with a warrant. He was accompanied by several men, who searched his house carefully, but of course found nothing to incriminate him. They seized, however, the púsári's gun and two or three jungle-knives that were in the house. Vallee's distress and indignation at the action of the headman and his satellites was great; but she restrained herself, and made no protest or remark of any kind. The púsári learned from the conversation of these unwelcome visitors that men had been sent to all the neighbouring villages in search of him.

Night at length came on. The púsári hung about the village till every one had retired to rest. Suddenly the idea occurred to him to go in search of the púsári village in the haunted jungle. He started off at once, and before long found himself in a part of the jungle which he knew could not be very far from the scene of his dreadful night's adventure. But though he wandered about all night and climbed two or three trees, in the hope of seeing the glare of the magic fires, he found nothing. Though he knew himself to be invisible, and therefore perfectly safe, he could not overcome the sensation of fear when he heard the fierce cries of wild beasts in the dark, lonely forest. He listened anxiously to the crashing and trumpeting of a herd of elephants in the jungle near him, and to the grating roar of a leopard seeking its prey. He fairly fled when he heard the whimpering of a couple of bears coming along the path towards him. When the morning broke, he returned to the village.

Several days passed, and the púsári remained invisible to mortal eyes. He suffered neither from hunger nor thirst nor fatigue, and required no sleep. Aimlessly and ceaselessly, he wandered



about, sunk in the lowest depths of misery and despair. His great wish was to find the písári village again, as he hoped that, in some way, the spell might then be removed from him. Night after night he entered the forest and wandered about till daybreak with eyes and ears open for any sign of the presence of písáris; but though, before long, he knew every path and game-track, and almost every tree for miles round, he could not find again the haunted jungle. Sometimes, when tired of his fruitless midnight wanderings, he would go to the rice-fields and sit by the blazing fires in the watch-huts and listen to the talk of the men and boys guarding the crops from the wild beasts. During the day, he haunted the village, entering all the huts unseen, and listening to the conversation of the villagers. Often he laughed to himself as he overheard secrets disclosed, weaknesses exposed, and designs laid bare, by men and women who thought themselves alone and safe from eavesdropping. The excitement about the murder of the headman soon died out, and it ceased to be the absorbing theme of conversation in the village. The písári was supposed to have got safely off to some distant country with his booty.

During this time, the písári watched his enemy unceasingly, his feelings of hatred and desire for vengeance growing deeper every day. Iyan was too cunning a villain to excite suspicion by showing his ill-gotten wealth, and he had not as yet profited much by his crime. Every evening, the písári watched him go into the jungle and gloat over the money and jewels he had hidden in the hollow tree.

The písári also kept an untiring, loving watch over his daughter. His brother and family had by this taken complete possession of his house and property. Vallee felt keenly their rapacious proceedings and unkind treatment of her, for her father more than once saw her, with tears of mortification and indignation in her eyes, rush out of the house into the jungle. But she very often met there one who dried her tears quickly and easily. Valan appeared to be always on the watch for her, and met her so often and so openly, that it soon became the talk of the village. Many sneered at him for a fool to think of marrying a portionless girl, as they now thought her, and also the daughter of a murderer. It soon became clear to the písári that matters were coming to a crisis, and that Valan, stung into resentment and defiance by the remarks of the villagers, and pitying Vallee's distress and unhappiness, would soon make her his wife and take her away. Valan's generous and honourable conduct towards his daughter, and his expression of belief in his innocence, had completely won the písári's heart. He saw with approval and pleasure the relations between the two, and the thought that his daughter would soon be provided for, helped in considerable measure to reconcile him to his unhappy lot.

It happened one night that the písári in one of his nocturnal rambles found himself at the river. It was now the height of the hot season, and the river was almost dry. Near where the path crossed the river was a small pool, the only water for miles around; to this the písári

went, and seated on the bank above, watched the wild animals coming to drink. It was a bright moonlight night, and the light reflected from the white sandy bed of the river made everything clearly visible. First came a pair of porcupines, which played about and chased each other, rattling their quills noisily, till the sudden appearance of an old she-bear with a cub on her back put them to flight. The bear drank and shuffled off; and then, with noiseless, stealthy step, a leopard glided out of the jungle into the moonlight. It looked about with its cruel, round gleaming eyes for a few moments, and then, lying down on its stomach, lapped its fill of water. Afterwards came a herd of wild-pigs, suspicious and wary, followed by a number of graceful spotted deer. As these were drinking, a slight noise in the distance caused them all to throw up their heads and listen in attitudes of alarm, and then to disappear in the jungle like shadows. A few moments later, with heavy but silent tread, a herd of elephants came along the river and drank at the pool, throwing copious showers of water over themselves with their trunks afterwards. The písári had by this time quite lost all fear of wild animals, so he sat and watched them with pleasure and in perfect security.

Suddenly the písári started to his feet, and with staring eyes and beating heart, gazed at something in the distance that had caught his eye. It was a brilliant glare of light over the trees. It was the písári village at last! Without a moment's hesitation, and breathless with anxiety, he hurried off in the direction of the light, going straight through the jungle towards it. Nearer and nearer appeared the light, till at last, with joy and exultation in his heart, he stepped out of the jungle into the well-remembered enchanted bazaar. But instead of the unearthly silence that had reigned in the bazaar the last time he was there, it was now filled with uproar. No particular sounds were distinguishable; but horrid shrieks and yells, awful execrations and hideous sounds of every sort, filled the air. Instead of taking no notice of him as before, the písáris glared balefully at him, and seemed to snarl and show their teeth. The creatures in the shape of cattle and dogs followed him threateningly; and numbers of evil-looking birds and loathsome creatures with wings flapped and fluttered about his head. But undaunted and undeterred, the písári walked steadily on, searching for the old she-písári's stall where he had drunk the magic potion. At last he found it. There sat the old hag, blinking and leering with the same hollow gourd of water before her. Seizing it, the písári raised it to his lips, and in spite of the awful din that instantly arose, drained it to the bottom. As he put it down empty, he fell to the ground insensible.

It was daylight when he recovered and staggered to his feet. He remembered instantly what had happened during the night, and was filled with intense anxiety to ascertain whether his experiment had broken the spell that had bound him. He gazed at his arms and legs, and it seemed to him that they were real flesh and blood. He pinched them, and was sure he had felt the sensation. A thrill of joy passed through him, for he felt certain that he had recovered his human

form. Taking his bearings by the sun, he made his way rapidly through the jungle to the river. As he descended the bank, he came upon a herd of deer, and it was with rapture that he saw them gaze in alarm at him and then dash hastily away. As he walked along the bed of the river, he noticed with intense satisfaction that he now had a shadow! There was no longer any doubt, and in the gladness of his heart the púsári began to sing at the top of his voice. As he turned into the path leading to Pandiyan, he caught sight of a man coming towards him; a moment later, he saw it was Valan Elúvan. On seeing the púsári, the young man stopped and looked at him with astonishment. After a moment's hesitation, he came forward. 'Why, iya, where have you been?' he exclaimed.

'I cannot tell you now, Valan,' replied the púsári. 'I am anxious to get to Pandiyan. Come with me, and I will tell you all.'

'Then you are not afraid to go to the village, iya?' said Valan hesitatingly.

'No. Why should I?'

'Have you not heard, then, of the murder of the múdliya and what is said about it?'

'Yes, yes! I know all about it, and who the murderer is.'—Valan glanced quickly and searchingly at the púsári.—'Ay, and I know more than that,' continued the púsári, returning his glance with a smile. 'I know how you have been making love to my daughter in my absence, and heard every word you said to her!'

Valan looked puzzled and confounded, but said nothing; and the two walked on together in silence, each buried in his own thoughts. Valan was wondering whether the púsári could possibly have been hidden in the jungle near his house all the time, and thus overheard his interviews with Vallee. He was also trying to account for his friendly manner towards him, so different from his former behaviour. He could not help feeling that the púsári was only feigning friendliness, and that he had some deep design in view, especially when he thought over his remark, that he knew who was the murderer of the headman; and who that was he felt only too sure—his own brother, and the other's deadly enemy. Meanwhile, the púsári, filled with joyful thoughts and anticipations, strode along at such a rate that Valan could scarcely keep up with him.

At length they reached Pandiyan. A number of the villagers were standing about, and they no sooner saw who it was that accompanied Valan than the cry was raised: 'The púsári has come back!' and men, women, and children came running out of the houses, filled with astonishment and excitement. Vallee, however, was not to be seen, though both the men looked round for her. Without taking notice of anybody, the púsári walked through the village, past his own house, to Iyan Elúvan's hut. Valan followed, grave and silent. The púsári's face was hard and stern as he entered the house. A glance round showed him there was no one there; it was, however, in great disorder, and something lying on the floor caught his eye. It was a torn fragment of cloth, and near it lay a small knife, its point stained with blood. The púsári picked them up and examined them; then, without a word, and followed by Valan and an intensely curious and excited but silent crowd of villagers, he left the

hut, and entering the jungle at its back, made his way to the hollow tree where Iyan had hidden the valuables he had robbed the múdliya of. As the party neared the spot, a loud cry rose from the villagers, for lying at the foot of the tree was a dark object; it was the body of Iyan Elúvan!

Uttering an exclamation of horror, Valan knelt beside his brother and laid his hand upon his heart. The body was still warm, but Iyan was quite dead. His right hand was bound up with a strip of cloth. On this being unwound by Valan, a couple of small punctured wounds were discernible in the fleshy part near the thumb. Cries of, 'It is a snake-bite!' 'He has been bitten by a snake!' rose from the villagers crowding round, for they all recognised the marks. Meanwhile, the púsári, with the assistance of a stick, had drawn the bundle out of the hollow in the tree. With it came the freshly shed skin of a cobra, and it was at once seen how Iyan had come by his death. A cobra had taken up its abode in the hollow where Iyan had placed his ill-gotten treasure, and on his attempting to withdraw it, had bitten him in the hand. Iyan had then gone back to his house, and lanced and washed the wound and bound up his hand; but feeling the approach of death, had crawled back to the tree, but for what purpose was never known, and had there expired.

Opening the bundle, the púsári displayed to the astonished gaze of the villagers the money and jewels it contained. Every one of them knew at once that it was the stolen property of the murdered headman; but how it came to be hidden in the tree and what Iyan had to do with it, they were at a loss to guess. And now the púsári spoke, and in a few words told them all that had happened to him since they had last seen him. They listened eagerly and attentively, and believed every word. They frequently interrupted his story of what he had seen in the púsári village, with exclamations of horror and amazement, and when he finished, they one and all loudly expressed their satisfaction at his return, and belief in his innocence.

The whole party then returned to the village, carrying the body of Iyan, and taking with them the recovered treasure. The púsári went at once in search of his daughter, and soon found her in the thrashing-ground in the fields winnowing rice. The meeting was a very happy one. Vallee's delight and joy knew no bounds. Could it have been possible to increase her happiness at her father's return, the assurance he now gave her of regard for Valan Elúvan and his approval of him as her future husband, would have done so. The púsári's next step was to go home accompanied by Vallee, and in a few cold, bitter words, to upbraid his relatives for their conduct and order them to leave his house at once. Ashamed and abashed, they went away without any attempt at explanation or apology. That afternoon, the young headman who had before inquired into the murder arrived at Pandiyan and at once instituted inquiries. The result was that the púsári's innocence was established and the dead man's guilt proved. The headman took charge of the stolen property.

'Truly, iya,' he said to the púsári as he departed, 'you have much to be thankful for.

Only by the favour of Púliya have you escaped from the wiles of the písisis, and from the snare that Iyan Elúvan laid for you. 'Tis well, indeed, to be a favourite of the god. May you be happy and prosper!

Before many days, Valan and Vallee were married, and went to live in an adjoining village. Relieved by the death of his enemy from constant worry and irritation, the písári's temper greatly improved. In course of time he became so much respected and so popular, that he was elected headman of the district. The secrets he learned when he wandered about the village invisible, proved to be of great value to him, as he was often able to turn his knowledge to account in his dealings with his fellow-villagers. He became in time a man of substance.

The písári's adventure was the subject of conversation through the whole country round for many weeks, and for a long time not a man, woman, or child dared enter the jungle after nightfall. But though in course of time the fear of the písisis wore off, and on several occasions villagers were lost in the forest and wandered about there all night, no one ever found again the Haunted Jungle.

#### A STICK OF INDIAN INK.

AMONGST familiar things that are of comparatively recent introduction we must include that artistic article inaccurately known as Indian ink. Even when the seventeenth century was more than half-spent, it was a rarity; and in the folio volume, published in 1672, descriptive of the Museo Moscarda, there is an engraving of a stick of Indian ink, which was included with some 'giants' teeth'—in reality mammoth bones—as amongst the chief curiosities of the collection. Notwithstanding its usual English name of 'Indian ink,' it is a Chinese manufacture. M. Maurice Jametel, a careful and accomplished French scholar, has compiled from Chinese sources an interesting monograph on its history and manufacture (*L'Encre de Chine, d'après des Documents Chinois*, traduits par M. Jametel: Paris, 1882). The historians of the Celestial kingdom, according to their usual custom in dealing with the affairs of their own land, attribute high antiquity to the use of ink; they say that it was invented by Tien-tchen, who flourished somewhere between 2697 and 2597 B.C. The Chinese at the time made use of a lacquer which was spread upon silk by the help of bamboo sticks. That, at least, is one interpretation of certain passages as to bamboo books. Next we are told that they used a sort of black stone, to which water was applied.

About two centuries and a half before the birth of Christ, a new departure arose in Kiang-si province, where they began to manufacture balls of lampblack made of a mixture of lacquer, firwood, and size. The new invention was warmly welcomed, and the processes rapidly improved. A poet, Oui-fou-jen, celebrating the novel aid to literature, mentions with especial

praise the ink that was made from the fir that grew on the hillsides of Lou-chan, in the province of Kiang-si. This province was celebrated for the fine quality of its ink; and under the Tang dynasty, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries of our era, there was an overseer who was a government official and whose functions were hereditary. Every year, a certain number of sticks of ink were sent to the Emperor as tribute.

During the reign of the Tang dynasty, we are told that the ink grew blacker with age, and that the size hardening, made the sticks as hard as stone. This points to the early development of the industry; for these characteristics of more than a thousand years ago are precisely those which are still regarded as the true tests of excellence. There is even some reason to think that there were state manufactories. The names of Li-tsao, Tchou-feung—whose place was called the Fir-burning Workshop—and of Li-tchao have been recorded as makers of excellence; but the son of the last-named, Li-ting-koueï, is still regarded as the most famous of ink-makers. He was an ingenious person, and moulded his 'sticks' of ink into a variety of quaint forms; and his 'swords' and 'cakes' were greatly admired. His reputation, however, rests on a more solid basis than a talent for fancy shapes. The sterling character of the man was reflected in his work; and the excellence and good quality of his ink attracted general admiration. It was said that if you wanted to test the genuineness of an ink-stick that professed to be from his workshop, you must break it in pieces, and throw the bits into a vessel of water. If the pieces at the end of a month remained intact and undissolved, it was a proof that the ink had come from the works of Li-ting-koueï.

There are points of contact between the manners of the East and West, for an honorific syllable or title was granted by the Emperor to the successful ink-maker, who thus became Lhi-ting-koueï. Another famous ink-maker was Tchang-yu, who was furnisher to the household of the Emperors under the dynasty of the Song, who flourished from 998 to 1023. The manufacture, however, declined in its artistic quality; but sometimes a maker arose who gave it a fresh impetus and importance. Two of these are named Pan-kou and Tchai-sin, the latter of whom is said to have rediscovered some of the antique processes by which Li-ting-koueï had gained his renown. A great variety of processes have been employed, and nearly every kind of combustible has been used for the production of the lampblack. The Emperor Hsiuan-tsong made use of perfumed rice-powder steeped in a decoction of *Hibiscus mutabilis*. At one locality where petroleum is used for lighting purposes, the lampblack resulting from its combustion is said to make an ink which for brilliance and blackness is superior to that made from firwood. The latter was, however, formerly the great source of Indian ink. After the lampblack or soot obtained by the burning of the wood, the most important thing is the size by which the particles are held together. This is frequently of animal origin.



The horns of the stag and of the rhinoceros are said to be laid under contribution; as also the ox and various kinds of fishes. There is some reason to think that this industry came to the Middle Kingdom from Corea. At the present time, it is said that, instead of firwood, the oleaginous matters of the *Dryandra cordata* and grains of hemp are almost universally used. In some places, the *Gleditschia sinensis* is preferred, and even the cane-flower and the haricot do not escape. It is curious that the Chinese author Chen-ki-souen does not mention the *Sesamum orientale*, which is generally regarded as the chief source from which the soot of Indian ink is now obtained. The processes of the manufacture have been elaborately described, and Chinese artists have exerted their ingenuity to portray all the details of an industry so important both to literature and art. In Europe, Indian ink is used for drawings only; but in China, it is the instrument by which the poet writes his verses and by which the judge records his sentences, as well as that by which the artist embodies his fugitive fancies.

Chinese imagination has run riot in doing honour to ink. As there are divinities to preside over almost every object, the instruments of literature do not lack their supernatural guardians, and their place and precedence are settled by strict rules of etiquette. The 'Prefect of the Black Perfume' is the official style of the ink-deity, and he ranks higher than the 'Guardian Spirit of the Pencil'; whilst on a still lower level stands the 'Genius of Paper.' One day when the Emperor Hiuan-tsong, of the Tang dynasty, was at work in his study, suddenly there popped out from a stick of ink that lay upon his table a quaint figure no larger than a fly, but having all the appearance of a Taoist priest. The startled monarch was soon reassured by the words of the apparition. 'Behold,' it said, 'the Genius of the Ink. My title is the Envoy of the Black Fir, and I have to announce to you that henceforth, when a man of true learning or genius writes, the Twelve Deities of Ink shall make their appearance to testify to the reality of his powers.' Alas for literature! From that day to this, the Twelve Deities of Ink have remained invisible, although many centuries have passed away.

#### THE GREAT JEWEL ROBBERY.

THE little world of fashionable London society was startled a few years ago by reports of a series of daring jewel robberies. The most costly gems seemed to disappear as if by magic under the very eyes of their owners. These robberies defied detection. A clue in one case was upset by the facts in another. When my aid as private detective was called in, I resolved to confine my attention to three distinct cases, though, of course, if useful information came in my way concerning other matters, I should know how to take advantage of it.

The first of the three on my list was the case of the Dowager Lady A., a somewhat eccentric old lady, who found her chief delight in arraying herself in her most valuable jewels and visiting in regular rotation all the West-end theatres. One night, when returning from one of these expe-

ditions, her carriage had been overturned by colliding with an omnibus. The dowager was seriously injured, and within a few days she was dead. Then, apparently for the first time, it was discovered that the whole of the jewels worn by Lady A. on the night of the carriage accident had mysteriously disappeared. Her maid was so overcome by the sight of her injured mistress, that she failed altogether to remember what was done with these jewels at the moment when her ladyship was undressed. It was even a question whether they might not have been actually lost in the street during the confusion of the accident. At all events, no trace of them could be found, and it soon became evident that in the excitement of summoning relatives, fetching doctors, and, very soon, nurses and undertakers, half-a-dozen persons might have entered the house and walked off with the jewels without any chance of detection.

Then I turned my attention to the second case—that of the young Countess of B. There seemed less room for doubt in this instance. The fashionable wedding of the autumn had been that of the Earl of B. with Miss Blank. There had been a churchful of people at St George's, Hanover Square, and a host of guests at the breakfast at the *Unique Hotel*. On the morning of the wedding, the earl had presented his bride with a magnificent tiara of diamonds. As the 'happy pair' were to start almost immediately for the continent, these diamonds, inclosed in a case, were hastily packed in a travelling bag, which the bride's travelling maid was never to let out of her sight. On arriving at Paris, the bag was apparently intact; but on opening the jewel-case, the tiara was amissing. Clearly, it must have been cleverly extracted from the case while lying in the bride's dressing-room, the empty case then being placed in the bag. Who had stolen the countess's diamonds? The maid, the bride's mother, and a younger brother had alone, as far as it was known, entered the room where the jewels were lying. I don't mind saying I had some difficulty in believing that a *bona fide* robbery had been committed. You may not believe it, but I am convinced that many a startling robbery of jewels would be explained, if we knew of all the private debts incurred by ladies of fashion, and of the sacrifices sometimes made by them to screen from disgrace themselves or some deeply involved connection.

Meanwhile, I made inquiries concerning robbery number three. This was at Colonel C's. There the only thing missed was a very valuable bracelet. There had been a dance at the house. During the evening, Mrs C. had slipped and sprained her ankle so severely that a doctor had to be summoned, and the party was somewhat prematurely brought to a close. Mrs C. distinctly remembered wearing the bracelet; but whether she had it on at the moment of falling, she could not remember. There had been naturally some confusion in the ballroom, and the lady had been carried to her own room. It was not for some hours that the loss of the bracelet was noticed. Then a search was made, but altogether without success.

In the first and third of these cases, suspicion seemed to point at once to some member of the household; but all my inquiries failed to find

any trace of the missing property. The servants all willingly consented, nay, even offered, to have their boxes searched, and for some weeks I confessed myself baffled. The missing property had disappeared as completely as though it had never existed.

Again and again I went over the whole circumstances as they had been related to me. There was, I reflected, one circumstance common to all three of the robberies, if robberies they were. There had been at the time some unusual amount of confusion, all lending opportunity for a theft to take place without immediate detection. The Dowager Lady A.'s diamonds had been stolen during her illness, or about the time of her death. The Countess of B. had lost her diamonds during the excitement of a wedding breakfast at an hotel. At Colonel C.'s house, there had been a ball on the night when the bracelet was lost. Was there any one, I asked myself, who, by chance or intention, had been present at each place at the time of the robbery? Any occasional waiter, for example, or servant of any kind? I could not find that there had been. Yet, if the thief were not one of the household, how was it that a stranger should in three separate instances fix on an establishment where the circumstances were favourable to a robbery of valuable property? In two cases, there had been illness and a hasty summoning of doctors. That led to another thought: was it possible that some experienced thief or gang of thieves had laid themselves out to track the broughams of fashionable West-end physicians, on the chance of finding hall doors left open, and property somewhat loosely guarded?

I had not thought of such a thing seriously before; but it seemed now to be an idea worth following up. Once more I resumed inquiries. Who was the doctor summoned in the case of the Dowager Lady A.? I easily ascertained. It was one of the best known men, at that time, in London. He and his brougham would be familiar to every thief who frequented West-end thoroughfares. I next inquired at Colonel C.'s. To my satisfaction, I learnt that the same doctor had attended in this case. 'Here,' I said to myself, 'I begin to see daylight.' Shortly afterwards, I made a further discovery. The coachman who drove the famous physician to Lady A.'s on the night of the accident, and to Colonel C.'s on the night of the ball, had only been in his employ a few weeks; and on the date of the Earl of B.'s wedding, the man had driven the carriage of one of the guests at the breakfast.

The clue I felt was becoming strong. The thief, I grew convinced, was a confederate of the grave-faced man in spotless black who drove the fashionable doctor from one house of sickness to another. I resolved to obtain an interview with the doctor, and after explaining my suspicions, plan some mode of detecting so consummate a rascal. Circumstances occurred to make me resolve to carry out my purpose without delay.

My journey took me to one of the somewhat sombre-looking streets that run down to the Thames, from the Chelsea side, between Chelsea Bridge and Battersea Bridge. The name 'Gideon West, M.D., Physician and Surgeon,' inscribed

on a brass plate told me when I had reached my destination. Dr West, I was informed, was still out, late though it was; and the time of his coming home was most uncertain. I was determined, however, not to return without seeing him; and after assuring the tired-looking servant that I should certainly await Dr West's return, even if I had to spend the night on the doorstep, I was shown into the consulting-room, where a wood-fire was still burning on the hearth. Seating myself in an armchair with a high screen behind me, I settled down to my vigil, however long it might be.

I had often noticed the house; for who did not feel some interest in so famous a medical man as Gideon West? Why he had chosen such a house I did not learn until afterwards; but I knew it was an old-fashioned, rambling sort of place, with a room built on here at one time, and there at another time. Windows had been blocked up at one place, and windows had been let in at another. In fact, it was a house that seemed to defy a stranger to explain upon what rule, or what want of rule, it had been so constructed.

Those who first heard of Gideon West as one of the most famous physicians in London, asked in astonishment how he could live in such a ramshackle-looking building. Perhaps they forgot that even famous doctors were not born famous. Gideon West, when he entered on his professional career, was anything but famous, and he was as poor as he well could be. Father and mother were dead, brothers and sisters he had none. An almost forgotten god-mother had, to his surprise, left him the old house at Chelsea. This was about the time he received his diploma. Thereupon, Gideon West married, for love, a girl without a penny, settled himself in his new possession, had the brass plate affixed to the door, and awaited the patients who were to prove his skill and make his fortune. It was a weary waiting; but the young bride had unlimited trust in her husband, and Gideon West never for an instant lost faith in himself. Slowly, very slowly, a small practice grew upon his hands; but the struggle that only braced Gideon West for the battle of life proved too terrible for the frail young wife. But there was no complaining, no repining, no word to tell of doubt, much less of despair, and Gideon West battled on. He knew, as though it had already come, that he should at last prevail. He had measured his own strength, and felt that he could trust it. But—and it was that *but* alone which troubled him—suppose he should have to wait years and years—suppose, as those years went by, he should see the colour pale on the face he loved; the brightness fade from the eyes he delighted to gaze into—suppose his long years of waiting were marked in the lines on his wife's young face—suppose when the golden gates of fortune flew open, he should find it was—too late!

How long I sat dreaming in Dr West's room, I know not; but it is certain I must have fallen asleep before the crackling embers. When I awoke, I found myself in all but darkness. The gas had been lowered, and only a flickering glow from the dying fire remained to cast drear and fantastic shadows on the ceiling. Many

hours must have passed. I must have been forgotten when the servants retired to rest, and Dr West either had not returned, or had not been made aware of my presence. My position was embarrassing. To wake up in the middle of the night and to find myself in a strange house, was a new experience. I groped about the room and felt for the door by which I had entered. It was locked. Bell of any sort I could find none. I tried to raise my voice; but the death-stillness and darkness of the room seemed to stifle me. I found the window, and looked out. It opened high above a courtyard closed in by walls. Again I tried the door. Then I remembered that it was a sort of passage-room; that there was a door leading from it to an apartment beyond. I managed to find this door, covered as it was with heavy tapestry hangings. Feeling very much like a thief, I tried the handle. It turned in my hand, and the door yielded noiselessly. Beyond, I saw a large square chamber, evidently a bedroom; but the bed was unoccupied. It was a quaint and haunted-looking room, with high oaken skirting and panelled ceiling. A couple of candles burned on the dressing-table, and threw a faint light over the dark furniture and the tapestries that hung against the walls.

Once more I tried to call out; but my tongue seemed dried up, and my voice refused to be heard. Presently, to my relief I heard a human voice. It evidently came from an apartment beyond the one into which I had ventured. Impelled, I hardly knew how, I resolved to venture farther; and as my footsteps fell noiselessly on the thick carpet, I could hardly believe I was not wandering in a dream through the mysterious chambers of the dead.

Yet more and more distinctly I heard the sad low voice that had caught my ear; and I approached stealthily, and I confess with something like awe, the door, which, as I perceived, opened from the bedroom to the chamber whence the voice proceeded. Here, as before, a curtain of antique tapestry, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, concealed the aperture; and trying cautiously the door, I found that it opened towards me. This gave me time to reflect before intruding, with stealthy steps, in the dead of night, into the privacy of this innermost chamber. Like a guilty creature, I stood and listened. The voice—for there seemed to be but one—was close at hand. It was a strangely melancholy voice, yet possessing a fascinating power that chained me to the spot.

'Will you never, never speak to me again, my darling, my darling!' I heard the words too plainly to mistake or forget them. 'Will you never speak to me again! Year after year, as the day comes round, I have prayed to God to grant me but one sweet word—one word to tell me of your love! Oh, my darling, my darling, have I prayed in vain? Will those lips never again open with a smile, those eyes never again look into mine, even when I come to you on my knees, as I do this Christmas morning!'

These strange words reproached me. Into what sacred precincts had I intruded? What heart-breaking grief was I desecrating?

Suddenly the tone of voice changed. The sad pathos gave way to accents of joy. 'See!

see, my beloved one; here are gifts worthy of a queen. Did I not tell you the time would come when all our struggles would be over; when there would be no more fighting for very bread; no more daily care; no more dread of the future; no fears for success, because it would be already mine! Ah, Gertrude, my wife, my darling, you were good and patient to me in those days. If the clouds were dark, your eyes were always bright; if the heavens were overcast, your smile drove away the storm; your voice was the music of my life, your ceaseless trust was my lodestar. But all has changed. Those days have passed. I am rich now; they say I am famous. The day is now too short for my work, and the night too short for rest. And yet I need rest. I feel I cannot live much longer if I may not rest. My brain is ever reeling with its weariness, yet I cannot sleep. Night after night is one long vigil. No sleep, no rest, no peace! I have been waiting for this night, for you, my love, for you! And now the hour has come. It is Christmas morning.—Hark! already I hear the sound of the Christmas bells. Ah! no wonder, for my wife, my beloved, has come back to me at last—come back to me from the dead!'

In feverish excitement, I listened. But there was no answer—not a sound, when that trembling voice ceased, to break the stillness of the night.

Presently, it began again. 'They tell me it is thirty years ago. Nonsense! That is only a dream. It was yesterday—yesterday, that you spoke to me for the last time—yesterday, that you bade me good-bye, and kissed me when I went away. And to-day, you are as you were then. No change, no change, none at all. You are as young and as fair as when I first took your hand in mine and called you "wife."'

Then there was a pause, and I was conscious of some movement beyond the tapestry behind which I was guiltily hiding.

What followed startled me, but it called me back to life. With a voice thrilling with emotion, the man once more broke the silence. 'Gertrude! These are yours. This is your birthday, and our old wedding-day, and I have not forgotten you. You do not yet believe that I am rich and famous, and that your husband has many friends. See! These are gifts from those whom I have rescued from death! They are thank-offerings to the "doctor's wife." Here is a bracelet. It is set with emeralds. No rarer could be found. Ah! how charming it looks on that dainty wrist! And here is something a princess might wear. It is a tiara of diamonds; and it is yours. Ah, my wife, let me place it on your brow! Oh, my queen, my queen!'

Unable to restrain myself longer, I cautiously drew aside the tapestry and peered into the chamber beyond it. It was comparatively small, but richly furnished, though in the fashion of olden times. It was, I thought, a lady's boudoir; but from where I was concealed, only a portion of the room was revealed to my view. It was not the room that arrested my attention, but what it contained. On a small table, almost within reach, lay those very ornaments—the earrings, the necklet, the pendant—of rubies and pearls, the loss of which had first led me to



unravel, if I could, the mystery of the great jewel robbery. I could not be mistaken. The description given me had been most minute. An exact counterpart of the set was not in existence; and here it lay on the table before me.

As I looked on with astonishment, from the part of the room I could not see there approached me, slowly and with pensive step and bowed head, like one walking in his sleep, the man whom I now almost dreaded to see—the famous doctor, Gideon West.

Could he be the author of these mysterious thefts? I could not believe it, and yet the proofs of his guilt lay before me. No longer hesitating, I stepped forward. So sudden and so unexpected was my appearance, that the man was unconscious of my presence until I had placed my hands upon his arm and gasped in trembling tones: 'Dr West—I—arrest'— But the sentence was never completed.

With a cry that might have been heard almost in the grave, the unhappy man shrank from me. At that instant, I turned in the direction to which he was pointing, with that agonised look upon his face; and as I did so, I loosened my hold and my hands fell powerless to my side. In the corner of the chamber hitherto hidden from me, I saw one of those old-fashioned bedsteads, with heavy draperies around it. The curtains were of silk, once a pearly white, now dulled and faded by age. The counterpane and pillow, once like driven snow, were white no more. Lying on the bed, with her head on the pillow, and her body partially concealed by the bed-linen, I saw the form of a woman—a woman who must once have been fair and beautiful to behold. Her luxuriant hair fell in wreaths on each side her face, and was then brought together over the bare white throat. Her arms were uncovered by the counterpane, and, clasping an infant child in their embrace, lay folded across her breast.

As I realised all the details of what seemed like a vision, I confess that my nerves failed me. I could only look at that cold pale face, lying so still on the pillow, with the child-face nestling beside it; and as I looked, I realised that the stillness was the stillness of death.

Like one entranced, I remained motionless for some moments, when again I was aroused to action.

A figure clothed in white—the face scarcely less pale than the face of the dead, the scanty locks of hair, white with age, hanging loosely about her shoulders, the eyes fixed on the bed, and the hands stretched out supplicatingly towards it—glided into the room. Then catching sight of the prostrate figure of the man who had cast himself beside the bed, with his hands spread out on the form that lay there, this apparition of woe, turning on me a glance of reproach that will haunt me to my dying day, exclaimed, amid streaming tears: 'You have killed him! My son, my son!'

And now, how shall I finish my story without wearying you with explanations? Let me go back to that old question once asked by Gideon West: 'What if success should come too late?' For all the happiness it could bring him, it did come too late. His struggle with fate, if not a long, had

been a bitter one. There fell a grievous sickness on the neighbourhood; disease and death stalked abroad, and mowed down their victims without counting the numbers. Against the grim tyrants, Gideon West fought day and night; his energy was endless, his courage undaunted; and he triumphed. No; not Gideon West; but the weapons of science triumphed in his hands. Disease and death were driven from the field; as they fled, they shot one last bolt at their victor—it glanced off his armour, but left his wife and child dead at his side.

Yes; he had won. But what was the victory worth? Fame, reward, wealth, all were his; but the one hope of his life was dead. Yet he never spared himself—never ceased work for a day—never hesitated at any sacrifice. He lived, he said, for only one object—it was to 'wear out his life.' The old home knew him to the end, and one faithful and devoted woman gave all her years to cheer the one hero of her life, the poor struggling surgeon, the great physician—the man who for pure love had married her only child: Gertrude's husband!

But the end came suddenly at last, and outwardly there seemed to be no signs of failing power. The mind seemed as fresh and as vigorous as ever. Only in one direction did it give way. Years of never-ceasing brooding over his dead wife and child did its work; and as the sad anniversary of his wife's birthday, her marriage, and of her death, once more approached, the strain overpowered him. A mania seized him; he must offer her the most costly treasures. Yet they must not appear to come from him, but from others, from those who owed their health, their life, to his skill. They must be proofs of his fame—proofs to the dead wife of her husband's triumph. The mania grew upon him. Wherever he saw anything that was of peculiar value, he seemed to claim it as his own, fully persuaded, as I believe, that it was a willing offering to the memory of his dead wife. And so those once inexplicable disappearances were explained. No one suspected, would dream of suspecting, the great doctor; and sane in everything else, yet with his brilliant intellect already ripe for decay, the unhappy man for weeks past had been the victim of a mania he neither comprehended nor was able to resist. I learnt afterwards that a medical conference had taken him to the house where the countess's diamonds were lost on that particular morning, and he must by accident have entered the room where the diamonds were momentarily left unguarded, and at once he had been led, by an irresistible impulse, to possess them.

Before I left that strangely haunted house at Chelsea on that Christmas morning, the twice-stricken mother led me to the dread bedside and placed my hands on the cold face. I looked at the mother, and then I felt the white hands that lay clasped before me. The woman read my thoughts.

'No,' she whispered; 'it is not the flesh of mortal! It is but a fearful counterfeit of death. It was modelled from the dead wife and child, and was to have been reproduced in marble for Gertrude's tomb. But Gideon West would not have it removed. Call it a morbid fancy or a

passionate love, which you will; but for years he has spent the hours of his solitude beside this poor image of his wife!—Now, tell me, was yonder dead man a thief, or was he the victim to unconquerable mania?"

For Gideon West was dead, and his secret died with him.

We laid him on his own bed; and when the coroner's jury said next day that he died 'by the visitation of God,' they spoke the truth.

The lost jewels were restored to their owners with the simple explanation that he who had taken them was beyond the reach of human justice.

For my part in the restitution, I was generously rewarded; but it was the last investigation I ever undertook. Many years have passed, and the world soon forgets; but I thought it would interest some to learn what I knew concerning the Great Jewel Robbery.

#### THE CULTIVATION OF CELERY.

Celery is an important and useful anti-scorbutic vegetable, which can be prepared for table in many ways, or simply used in soup. It is also by some held to be a good specific against rheumatism. Within the last seven years, celery-growing has become quite a business in North Notts and South Yorkshire. Within a radius of ten miles of Bawtry, in the latter county, twenty-five acres of land sufficed for the crop in 1878; but during 1885, upwards of four hundred acres were devoted to the cultivation of celery. Peat with a clayey or cool subsoil answers better for growing celery than stronger land. Most kinds of crops exhaust the land, but celery improves it.

The seed-beds are prepared in January and early in February, of leaves or manure, or any kind of heating material at hand. We learn from a communication by Mr C. M. Brewin, of Bawtry, that the earliest crops are ready for taking up the first week in September, and realise from two to three shillings per dozen roots retail price. The crop is worth from fifty-five to sixty pounds per acre, often more for very good crops; later crops from thirty-five to forty-five pounds per acre. The number of plants required per acre is sixteen thousand. Cost of labour in producing earliest crops on the ground: Average rent from thirty-five shillings to two pounds per acre; rates, taxes, and tithe, ten shillings per acre; manure, from nine to ten pounds per acre; labour, ten pounds per acre; carting to stations, four pounds per acre: leaving a profit for the best early crops of twenty-eight to thirty-two pounds. For late crops, labour is two pounds less, bringing a profit of ten to twenty pounds per acre. There are some failures, which are generally in the first year. The average quantity sent away weekly from various stations in the neighbourhood is two hundred tons.

Several labourers, very poor men, have started with small plots, and worked them in early morning before their ordinary day's work began, and in the evenings, with the assistance of their wives and children. These men have now, some one horse and cart, and others two, and grow from two to five acres each.

#### SPRING'S ADVENT.

I LOOKED forth on the world to-day,  
As waked the rosy morn,  
And every budding leaf and blade  
Proclaimed the Spring was born.  
The southern wind's seductive wiles  
My footsteps lured along  
Far from the town's unlovely ways,  
Far from its madding throng.

O sweet the first glad greeting is  
With nature, when the Spring  
Is spreading forth her tender charms,  
And flowers are blossoming!  
O sweet to tread the soft green earth  
When fresh the breezes blow,  
Untrammelled by a thought of care,  
And free to come or go!

The lambs were bleating on the hills  
Where farmsteads nestling lie,  
Safe sheltered from the rude fierce blasts  
That storm the hill-tops high.  
The swallows glanced on flashing wing;  
Dear birds of promise they,  
That speak the reign of winter past,  
Dawn of a brighter day.

Down from the heavens the poet-lark  
His numbers madly flung  
In liquid notes of purest joy,  
That through the valley rung;  
And leaping streams, from winter's yoke  
So glad to be set free,  
Took up the jocund minstrelsy,  
And bore it to the sea.

In sportive glee the children trooped  
The meadow-paths along,  
And carolled forth, in happy voice,  
A careless snatch of song.  
Ah, well they know the sunlit spot  
Where first the primrose sweet  
Looks out upon the wooded copse  
The waking earth to greet.

O happy children! life to you  
Is full of light and flowers;  
Athwart whose skies of tender blue  
No threatening storm-cloud lowers.  
I wonder, do ye ever think  
Of children far away,  
Who only see through vistas dim  
God's glorious light of day!

Whose lives are spent in narrow streets,  
Or alleys foul with sin;  
Where squalor, poverty, and death,  
Alas! are life within.  
No fresh pure winds their tresses blow,  
Green fields they never trod,  
Or plucked the nodding flowers that grow  
Fresh from the hand of God.

O little children! young, yet old  
In life's excess of woe,  
I dread for you the dreary ways  
Your faltering feet must go.  
O little eyes, that never yet  
Beheld a lovely thing,  
I wonder what your joy shall be  
Through God's eternal Spring!

CHARLES H. BARSTOW.

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